

Message Text

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64

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EA-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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P R 281810Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8426

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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E O 11652 N A

TAGS: ML

SUBJ: MALI STUDENTS MARCH IN SUPPORT OF VIETCONG

1. SEVERAL HUNDRED STUDENTS FROM MALI'S HIGHER TECHNICAL SCHOOLS MARCHED BRIEFLY BY THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN ORDERLY FASHION UNDER HEAVY POLICE ESCORT ON JAN 28 ON THEIR WAY TO THE CHINESE EMBASSY WHERE THEY PRESENTED A PETITION TO THE CHINESE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES SUPPORTING THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND THEIR CHINESE ALLY AGAINST THE PUPPET REGIME OF SOUTH VIETNAM SUPPORTED BY THE IMPERIALISTS. TWO PLACARDS MENTIONED THE U.S., I.E. "DOWN WITH AMERICAN IMPERIALISM", AND "AMERICANS OUT OF VIETNAM." RADIO MALI BROADCAST THE STATEMENT READ BY A STUDENT DELEGATE WHO WAS INTRODUCED AS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNION NATIONAL DES ETUDIANTS MALIENS. (OUR INFORMATION IS THAT UNEM HAS BEEN DISBANDED OR SUPPRESSED FOR YEARS; ONE MALIAN JOURNALIST TOLD EMBOFF THAT "FRANKLY I DON'T THINK IT EXISTS".)

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STUDENT STATEMENT WHILE VISCIOUS IN TONE MADE NO

DIRECT REFERENCE TO THE U.S. THE MARCHERS WERE LED BY BABA HAIDARA, DIRECTOR OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC INSTRUCTION IN THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND ALIDOU TOURE, SECRETARY GENERAL IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

2. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ASKED AND RECEIVED AN APPOINTMENT WITH SECRETARY GENERAL IN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ALIDOU TOURE, NO 2 IN FOR MINISTRY (NOT YET AWARE THAT TOURE HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE DEMONSTRATION) SHORTLY AFTER THE DEMONSTRATION TOOK PLACE. CHARGE OBSERVED TO TOURE THAT HE HOPED STUDENT DEMONSTRATION DID NOT REPRESENT DETERIORATION U.S.-MALI RELATIONS JUST AS WE WERE EXPECTING NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR FEBRUARY 11. TOURE EMPATHICALLY ASSURED CHARGE THAT DEMONSTRATION WAS SPONTANEOUS STUDENT-INSPIRED AND THAT MALI GOVT WAS IN NO WAY INVOLVED NOR DID IT SUPPORT THE DEMONSTRATION. TOURE SAID THAT GOVT INTERVENED (PRESUMABLY HE WAS EXPLAINING HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE MARCH) TO KEEP THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION WITHIN PROPER BOUNDS.

HE ASSURED CHARGE THAT NEWLY ARRIVING AMERICAN AMBASSADOR WOULD NOT BE CONFRONTED WITH DEMONSTRATIONS. TOURE SAID THAT ALL COUNTRIES HAD SPECIAL PROBLEM DEALING WITH STUDENTS AND MALI WAS NO EXCEPTION. "WE HAVE HAD A LOT OF DIFFICULTY WITH OUR STUDENTS LATELY," HE LAMENTED. CHARGE EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS SURPRISED THAT VIETNAMISSUE HAD ARISEN NOW IN LIGHT OF PARIS PEACE ACCORDS SIGNED BY U.S. FOR WHICH SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD RECEIVED NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. CHARGE SAID THAT U.S. HAD WITHDRAWN ITS TROOPS AND THAT WITH CONTENTIOUS ISSUE OF VIETNAM BEHIND US, U.S. EFFORTS WERE AIMED AT THE FUTURE PARTICULARLY AT HELPING COUNTRIES LIKE MALI WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DROUGHT RELIEF. FINALLY CHARGE TOLD TOURE THAT HE WISHED TO EMPHASIZE HOW MUCH ALL AMERICAN ENJOYED WORKING WITH THE MALIAN PEOPLE WHO WERE SO FRANK, HONEST, AND HOSPITALBE. CHARGE SAID THAT 50 AMERICAN AIRMEN WHO HAD WORKED FOR SEVEN MONTHS IN MALI LAST YEAR HAULING RELIEF GRAIN HAD PARTICULARLY REMARKED ABOUT THE FINE QUALITIES OF THE MALIAN PEOPLE.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY AWARE THAT GOM IS HAVING ITS TROUBLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS SOME OF WHOM HAVEN'T BEEN PAID THEIR SALARIES IN THREE MONTHS. A TEACHER'S CONFERENCE CALLED FOR JAN 26 RUMORED TO BE HELD TO PUSH FOR EARLY ELECTIONS IN MALI WAS CALLED OFF BY THE STUDENTS ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE THEY FEARED GOVT HARASSEMENT ESPECIALLY IF THEY EXPRESSED THEMSELVES TOO FRANKLY ABOUT GOVT'S CALL FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM. EMBASSY SPECULATES THAT GOM MAY HAVE FOUND

ANNIVERSARY OF VIETNAM PEACE ACCORDS CONVENIENT EXCUSE
FOR LETTING STUDENTS BLOW-OFF STEAM AGAINST YANKEE
IMPERIALISM RATHER THAN FOCUS ON EMBARRASSING ISSUES ON
HOMEFRONT. ONE FALLOUT FROM DEMONSTRATION MAY HAVE BEEN
RAPID SIGNING OF MALI'S R&R DROUGHT RELIEF PROGRAM WITH
DROUGHT COORDINATOR, MINISTER DEFENSE DOUKARA WHO HASTILY
ARRANGED CEREMONY SAME DAY AS DEMONSTRATION WITH PRESS
AND RADIO COVERAGE. CONSENSUS OF EMBASSY WAS THAT MILD
DEMONSTRATION DID NOT WARRANT ANY STRONGER MEASURE OF
ANNOYANCE THAT CHARGE'S EXPRESSED CONCERN TO FOREIGN
MINISTRY SENIOR OFFICIAL ABOUT MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE
U.S. MALI RELATIONS.
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